Golf Course Commission Meeting
February 28, 2022
Minutes

Members Present: Don Espach (Chairman); Joe Gaudiano (Vice-Chairman); Tom Cerulli; Tony Ciccaglione; Shelly Dowling; Owen Evans; Dave Galla; Nate Moyer; Diane Wheeler

Also Attending: Bobby Brown, Director of Golf Operations, Andy Fries

Members Absent: None

Mr. Espach called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

Mr. Espach began the meeting by welcoming our two new Golf Commissioners – Mr. Dave Galla and Mr. Nate Moyer. Mr. Moyer stated that he grew up playing golf in Arizona and moved to Trumbull several years ago. He plays golf at Tashua at least once a week and is active in the Father’s Club at the Trumbull schools. He looks forward to working on any committee that requires his help. Mr. Galla stated that he grew up in Trumbull and has golfed at Tashua for many years. He previously served on the Golf Commission in 2010 and 2011 helping out on the finance committee. He looks forward to helping out in any way he can.

Mr. Espach also thanked the Hiring Committee (Mr. Gaudiano, Mrs. Wheeler, Mrs. Dowling and Mr. Espach) for their yeoman’s work over the past two months in helping hire a new Director of Golf Course Properties for Tashua Knolls.

Mr. Espach also introduced Mr. Andrew Fries who will be the next Director of Golf Course Properties beginning the first or second week of March. Mr. Fries told the Commission he was happy to be at Tashua. He has nearly 30 years of experience in the golf business and many years as a superintendent. He was most recently the Superintendent at Brownson Country Club.

Review and Approval of Prior Minutes:

Review and approval of the Minutes of January 24, 2022 . . . A Motion was made by Mr. Guadiano; seconded by Mr. Cerulli, to approve the minutes as is. Motion carried unanimously (8 – 0); Abstain: Galla.

Review and approval of the Minutes of February 10 2022 . . . A Motion was made by Mr. Guadiano; seconded by Mrs. Wheeler, to approve the minutes as is. Motion carried unanimously (7- 0); Abstain: Galla, Moyer.

Audience Participation:
- Letter attached from Trumbull resident, Robert Saunders.

Assistant Golf Course:
- No report given
Green Committee (Shelly Dowling):
- Mrs. Dowling concurred with Mr. Saunders that we owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Paul Lupo and we were very lucky to have him work at Tashua Knolls.
- No meeting was held this month.
- The crew is presently working on trees and overgrowth between Knolls #8 and 18. They are also painting the maintenance office and preparing the accessories for the course.
- A starting date for the 2022 season was discussed. It was agreed that Mr. Brown and Mr. Fries would decide on an opening date based on course conditions and Mr. Fries' comfort with the status of the maintenance department.

Director of Golf Operations (Bobby Brown):

Tashua Golf Operations
- Mr. Brown also wanted to publically thank Mr. Lupo. He stated it was a real pleasure working with and learning from Mr. Lupo.
- Mr. Brown returns to work on March 1st and has just hired a new Jr. Golf Assistant who will start at the end of April. ATK golf programs will ramp up in May when the new assistant comes on board. ATK is still looking to hire an additional golf assistant.

House Committee (Tony Ciccaglione):
- See report attached
- The house committee will also look at replacing the rug in the Clubhouse.

Concessionaire (Domenick Faustini):
- No report given

Finance (Joe Gaudiano):
- See report attached
- A short discussion was held on the strategic plan as outlined in the report. A draft Mission and Value statement from 2020 will be distributed to the Commissioners.

Personnel (Diane Wheeler):
- Mrs. Wheeler spoke about the fruits of the labor of the Hiring Committee and the long processes involved. She welcomed Mr. Fries to the Commission as well.
- Mrs. Plumeau added that we are in the process of re-hiring our seasonal employees. We have also posted seasonal positions in the areas of Starters/Rangers, Groundskeepers, Mechanic and Gardener. The application can be found on the Town’s website as well as www.tashuaknolls.com.
- Mrs. Wheeler asked about comments from several members of the lady’s clubs regarding the hiring of women. Mrs. Plumeau responded that Tashua Knolls does not in any way discriminate against women. We have not had many women apply for the seasonal jobs. We had a female gardener for a few years who decided not to return. We did have one female applicant for starter/ranger, however, we received a large amount of applications and only needed to hire two individuals at the time.

Correspondence
- Mr. Chris Lenzen representing the Men’s Club, submitted his request for a District Tournament at carts only rates for the following dates:
1. Monday, September 12 – Tee Times for approximately 72 players
2. Saturday AM, September 17 - 7 tee times
3. Saturday PM, September 17 – 4 tee times
4. Sunday AM, September 18 – 1 tee time
5. Sunday AM, September 18 – 2 tee times

- A discussion was held regarding the rate for the tournament. There was no motion made and the decision on granting the tournament was tabled until the March meeting.

Old Business:
- None

New Business:
- None

Adjournment:

A motion was made by Mrs. Dowling at 8:28 PM; seconded by Mrs. Wheeler to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously (9 - 0).

Respectfully submitted,

Christine A. Plumeau
Golf Course Commission Clerk
Robert Saunders  
4404 Madison Ave  
Trumbull, CT 06611

March 4, 2022

Joe Gaudiano  
Vice Chairman  
Golf Commission  
Town of Trumbull

Re: Statement during Golf Commission meeting on February 28th 2022

Dear Joe;

Here is the statement I made:

My name is Robert Saunders and I reside at 4404 Madison Avenue. I grew up in Trumbull and returned to live here 6 years ago. I wanted to serve my community that gave me so much so I currently serve as the Vice Chairman of the Zoning Board of Appeals. Had I known any better I should have asked to be placed on your commission because I am one of the few residents of the town who has requisite experience because I have 23 years of experience serving the golf industry.

The last time I came before this commission I expressed my disappointment in moving on from Hidalgo. If I am not mistaken I believe I said it was the biggest mistake the commission has ever made. Then Hidalgo was replaced by Doug Snyder. We all know how that worked out; Which brings us to Paul Lupo. The Tashua golf community owes a huge debt to Paul. He took the reins and was able to reinvigorate the morale of the maintenance staff, maintain quality playing conditions with dilapidated equipment without a mechanic; and the course had one of its best years ever. Last season I brought six superintendents from private clubs in the area to play Tashua. They were all impressed with the conditions of the course knowing the amount of rounds played at Tashua and the limitations of managing a public golf course.

Paul was a diamond in the rough. Even though he doesn’t have a formal degree in turf maintenance, for someone under the age of 30, he knows more about maintaining a golf course than most superintendents. He put a great deal of effort to demonstrate to this commission that he deserved to be given the superintendent position, but more than that he deserved this commission’s respect; Which I do not believe he received.

I understand the Town’s hiring process and the other external factors that delayed this process. That aside it is the lack of respect and appreciation for the job he did last season that caused him to leave Tashua. I want the commission to recognize that when negotiating Paul’s potential compensation the commission was quibbling over an amount of money that was equal to less than one-tenth of one percent of the annual budget for arguably the most important position on the golf course.

However, you got lucky with the hiring of Andy. He is the most pragmatic, resourceful, and personable superintendents I have ever met. I know he is going to do a great job. This commission has a lot of work to do. The maintenance equipment needs to be overhauled and you need to find a mechanic that will
instill a maintenance program for it. The course needs a new irrigation system. The clubhouse is outdated. Now that the right people are in place this commission needs to focus on taking advantage of the recent increases in revenue to address the issues I just identified and come up with a long-term plan for continuing to improve the golf course to ensure it’s a sustainable resource for the Town of Trumbull.

Sincerely

Robert Saunders
Topics For discussion

0 Painting required for the Starter Office, Front and Rear Entrance. Potential colors Blue/Gray.
0 Rain shelter at the 17th hole needs wood repair and green paint.
0 Lightning Protection System parts received. Will be installed when ground conditions improve.
0 Contacted UI for input on rebates for LED fixtures in all areas. Estimated savings $25,000. Spreadsheet completed for review.
0 Power wash required for all bathrooms plus paint. Steam clean rugs. Required to be done before course opening by Domenick.
0 Roof bid drawings and specifications were completed and are out to bid.
0 Club House heat/air conditioning supplemental unit installation completed on 2/16/2022.

Respectfully submitted

Anthony Ciccaglione – Head of House Committee
## 2021 Yearly Income

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Misc. Business

- Welcome New Superintendent - Andy Fries

- Delay opening?

- 15-20 year strategic plan
  - Starts with a vision statement - expect to vote next meeting
  - Greens committee - agree ‘vision’ of the course / equipment replacement schedule/major improvements
  - House committee - ‘agree’ vision of clubhouse/major repair schedule (Mar-June)
  - Finance committee - checks to ensure 15 yr schedule of greens and house committee can work within the budget (June-July)
  - Full commission review and vote (Aug-Sept)
Morning,

Per our conversation, see the below request from Jeff Penkoff and myself regarding the 2022 Greater Bridgeport District Golf Tournament.

Thank you

Chris Lenzen
Jeff Penkoff

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

Don / Golf Commission,

Regarding our request for reserved starting times, there may be some confusion as to what we are asking. The District Tournament is a match play event meaning competitors are eliminated after each round. Since this event will be played over 2 days (after the Monday 9/12 qualifying round) we are only requesting a total of 14 times over the 4 racking sessions, the breakout would be as follows:

Saturday morning 9/17 - 7 times
Saturday afternoon 9/17 - 4 times
Sunday morning 9/18 - 1 time
Sunday afternoon 9/18 - 2 times (finals)

As you can see, with the exception a few extra times required on Saturday morning 9/17, we won't be impacting the ability of anyone wishing to rack on their own to get a time to play.

Final note, this is the 75th year of the District Tournament which was established to promote the spirit of competition and amateur golf with local clubs in the area. Tashua has been a participant in this event since its inception in 1976, as a matter of fact we have players who have been competing in this event longer than Tashua has been a golf course who now represent Tashua. We have hosted this tournament every time our turn in the rotation has come up, it would be a shame if we are unable to accommodate the local clubs this time around with an opportunity to show off our golf course.

Thank you for your consideration.